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Notes from Editors

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Notes from the Editors

Mammo Muchie and Angathevar Baskaran
(*Editors-in-Chief*)

Information and communication technologies or ITCs are considered to have brought about a major paradigm shift witnessed by the far-reaching changes in the way interactions are taking place among peoples, economies, societies and communities in the world today. We have now reached a stage of which we would consider to be societies of “e-people” with very few people who have not gone electronic.

The prediction is that the numbers who are going “E” will rapidly grow and those who are yet to become computer literate will dwindle overtime. We have added to space, energy and matter another important phenomenon of information that is driven by a data revolution.

E-people populations are becoming a global phenomenon in the form of electronic herds across the world, making instantaneous communication a reality. It is remarkable how the recent political changes in North Africa have been attributed to the ease of communication that ICTS have provided among those who are able to coordinate protests. It appears that things which once relied on human expenditure of energy have been changed with the application of ICTs in all walks of life. From the military application of guided attack drones to business processes such as passport collection to the payments of ones taxes. In effect humans are increasingly joining up to the “e-revolution” and those who fail to do so are likely to fall behind, losing the opportunity to share in the possibilities and play an active role in daily life and worldly activities. Today alongside the physical repositories of data there is a massive resource of data in the virtual world created by the application of ICT. This has enabled a world of data circulating across the globe with ease and speed once unimaginable.

Significantly as this e-revolution globalises data resources, the African continent has also felt its impact, witnessed especially in the growth of mobile phone ownership. However the need for a comprehensive ICT

infrastructure has still not been realised. Here critical questions remain regarding the establishment and spread of an ICT infrastructure. It is a challenging and demanding task requiring the coordination of Africa wide levels of ICT programmes which are robust and sustainable at the local, national and regional levels. For whilst the importance of ICTs for Africa's economic transformation is highly appreciated, there is a wide gap between the intent and the actual promotion of a viable ITC infrastructure across Africa. Here NEPAD and AU can play a significant supportive role, provided current Governments are encouraged and allowed to frame the economic transformation, by championing an African lead.

Another major challenge in Africa is the continuance of governance problems and crises. There is an urgent demand for greater accountability, equity and the prioritisation of government services to improve the well-being of citizens. Real transformation comes when the welfare of the people in Africa become the number one priority at all levels from the local to state, from the regional to the continental . ICT can be used to facilitate government public institutions to better meet the needs of its citizens and enabling greater and more effective citizen participation. This ability to coordinate from local to regional can be facilitated by a nationwide diffusion of ICTs. The ICT4D is critical to bring about such a change, not by itself, but also by the inclusion of other relevant dimensions.

This AJSTID issue of Vol. 3 is a special Issue devoted to ICT and Economic Transformation in Africa. It consists of eight research papers which are all focused entirely on ICTs in various African economies, including Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and Cameroon. The second part constitutes research notes and finally there are two book reviews.

The Guest editors Samuel Wangwe and Olu Ajakaiye wrote a synthesis of the research work from which the papers were all developed. The research paper on: Policy implications of the Relationship between ICT access and Usage and Well-being: a case study of Kenya was written by Timothy Mwololo Waema and Obadia Okinda. Peter Ulanga did the paper on "Assessing ICT Impact on development and Economic Transformation in Rural areas in Tanzania: The Case of Rural Tele-Centres in Tanzania. The Paper on: "The Impact of the Nigerian Information and Communication Technology Policy on the Printing and Publishing Industry" was written by John O. Adeoti, Foluso M. Adeyinka and Moses O. Ubaru. Sunday A. Khan and Arsène Honoré Gidéon Nkama wrote the paper: "An Assessment of Application Software in Cameroon". Latif Dramani and Oumy Laye wrote the paper on the "Link between ICT Investments, Growth and Jobs Creation in Senegal". Vijay K. Bhasin, Simon K. Harvey and Eme Umoeka Fiawoyife wrote "the Impact of Cellular Phones on Technical and Allocative Efficiencies of Commercial Taxi and Fishing Boat Firms in Ghana". Mutawakilu A.

Tiamiyu, Abiodun S. Bankole and Rosemary O. Agbonlahor wrote the paper on “Impact on ICT Investment, Ownership and use of Cassava value Chain in South Western Nigeria” , and finally the paper by Silvia Masiero: “Conceptualising Accountability in ICT4D: the Complementary Perspectives of Information Systems and development Management”.

In the Research notes section, Mammo Muchie put together the views of some of the leading of economics of innovation thinkers on Christopher freeman’s enduring contributions. In addition, we had research notes contributions from Sujit Bhattacharya and Jayanthi A. Pushkaran on the “Research and Innovation for Drug Development in Neglected Diseases: a Case Study of India”; and the contribution by Jacques Gaillard and Anne Marie Gaillard on the development and strengthening of Research Capacities in Madagascar. The final research note on “Learning, Upgrading and Innovation in Nigerian Indigenous Industries”, is by Siyanbola Willie, Olamide Olumuyiwa, Isola Oluseyi, and Egbetokun Abiodun.

The two book reviews are authored by Mammo Muchie and Angathevar Baskaran on the AU-NEPAD African Innovation Outlook, and by Mammo Muchie and Shakespear Mudombi, on Local Governance and ICTs in Africa: Case Studies and Guidelines for Implementation and Evaluation.,

This special issue addresses the important problem of how to build an ICT infrastructure for African economic transformation. The research papers do not put a closure but rather open this important research area so that rigorous scholarship feeds the policy learning needed to construct a comprehensive ICT4D technological infrastructure that can connect Africa reliably for a smart, inclusive and sustainable development.